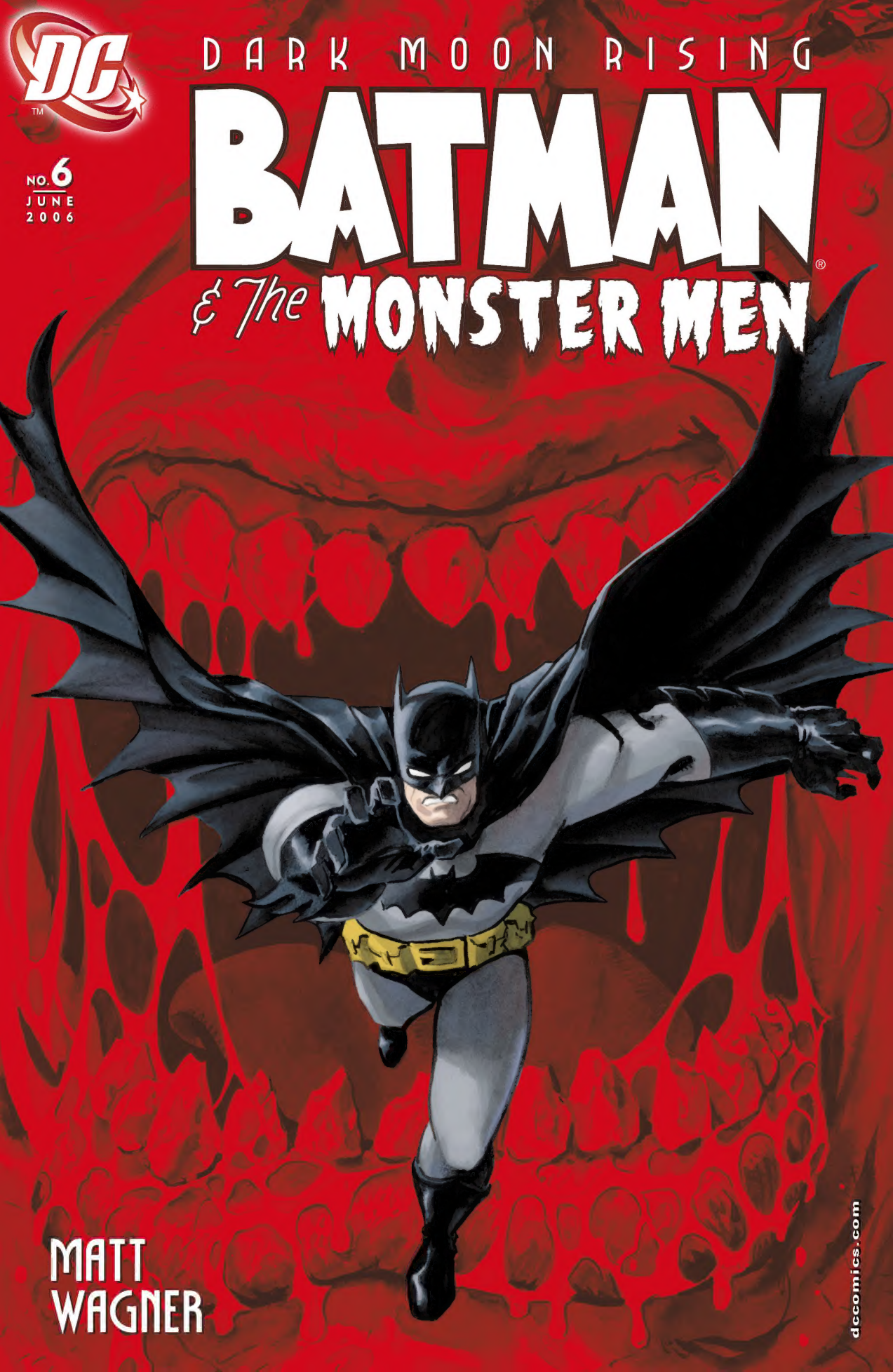
DARK MOON RISING
BATMAN
& The MONSTER MEN
NO. 6
JUNE
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MATT
WAGNER
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MATT WAGNER·STORY & ART

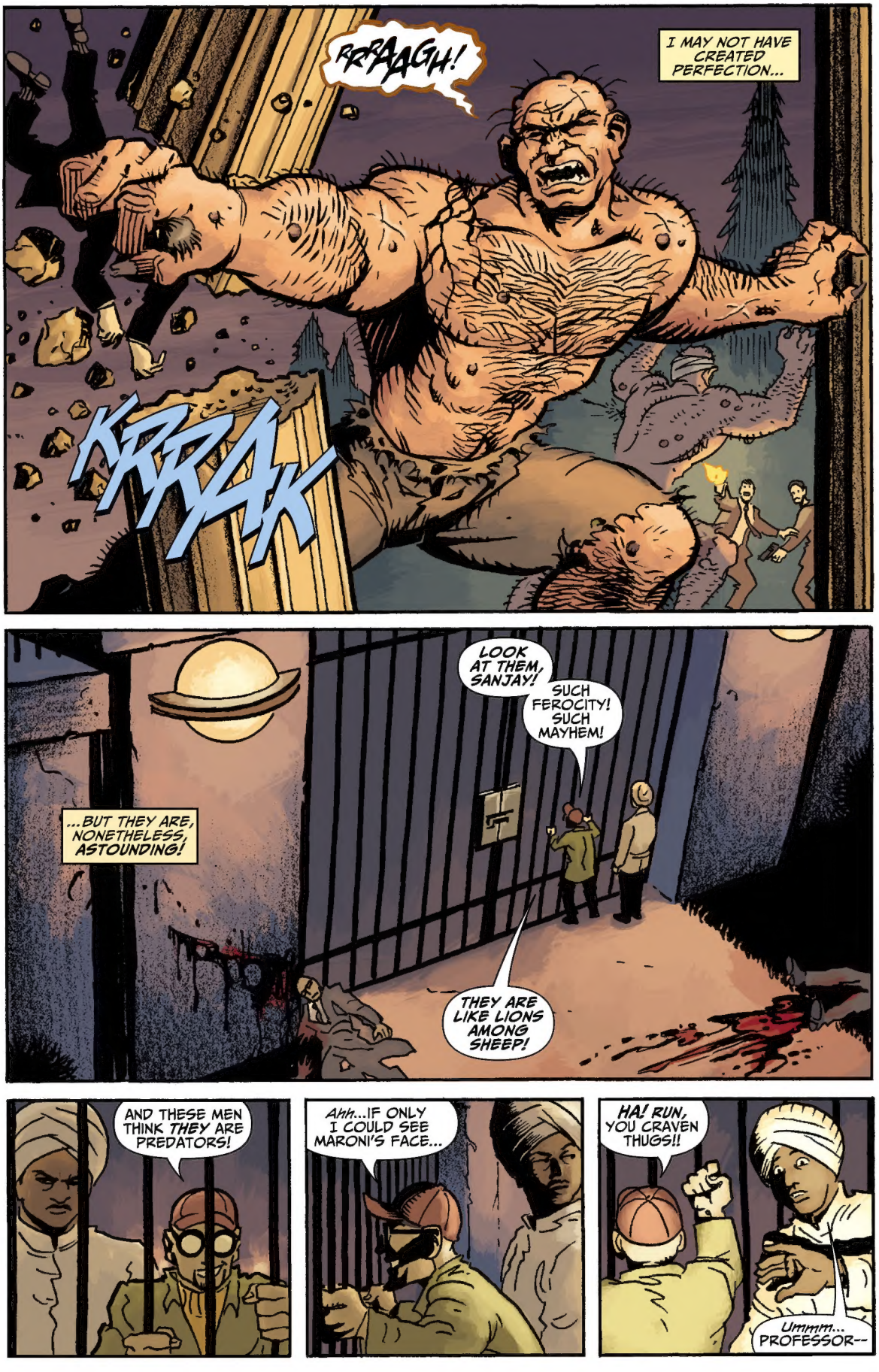
DAVE STEWART ·COLORS· • ROB LEIGH ·LETTERS· • WAGNER & STEWART ·COVER· • BRANDON MONTCLARE ·ASST. EDITOR· • BOB SCHRECK ·EDITOR·

BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

GEEZ!
KRAGGH
AIN'T THAT...
WHATSISNAME--SANTO?
YEAH...
BUT WHAT TH--? HE WAS WORKIN' THE FRONT GATE! HOW'D HE...?
WE'RE ON THE THIRD FLOOR, FER CRYIN' OUT LOUD!

TH' HELL--?
LIKE GREAT BEASTS, THEY CLAMBER OVER THE FENCE AND ITS ILLUSORY SAFETY.
THE MEN INSIDE ARE ILL PREPARED FOR WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT TO ENCOUNTER.
RAAGGH!
HOLEEE--!
THE GUNS WILL ONLY SERVE TO ENRAGE THEM.
SOMETHING INSIDE ME IS PROUD...
OH, GEEZ--
THWAK
...LIKE A MOTHER CAT AS IT WATCHES ITS YOUNG TOY WITH A MOUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME.

SAL, WHATTHEHELL ARE THOSE?!
I DUNNO, BUT I WANT 'EM DEAD!!
MORE GUNFIRE...
BLAM BLAM BLAM
...DEAFENING...
...DRAWN BY THE LIGHTS...
...THEY CLOSE IN ON THE MAIN ENTRANCE...
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
RRNK--
BOOM
...NONE CAN WITHSTAND THEM.
NNRGG!
AHG--!


RRRAAGH!
I MAY NOT HAVE CREATED PERFECTION...
KRRAK
LOOK AT THEM, SANJAY!
SUCH FEROCITY! SUCH MAYHEM!
...BUT THEY ARE, NONETHELESS, ASTOUNDING!
THEY ARE LIKE LIONS AMONG SHEEP!
AND THESE MEN THINK THEY ARE PREDATORS!
Ahh...IF ONLY I COULD SEE MARONI'S FACE...
HA! RUN, YOU CRAVEN THUGS!!
Ummm... PROFESSOR--

LOOK OUT!

KRASH

I had always imagined smashing through the Roman's entry gates...

...but under far different circumstances.

The front lawn is a battlefield.

I was right.

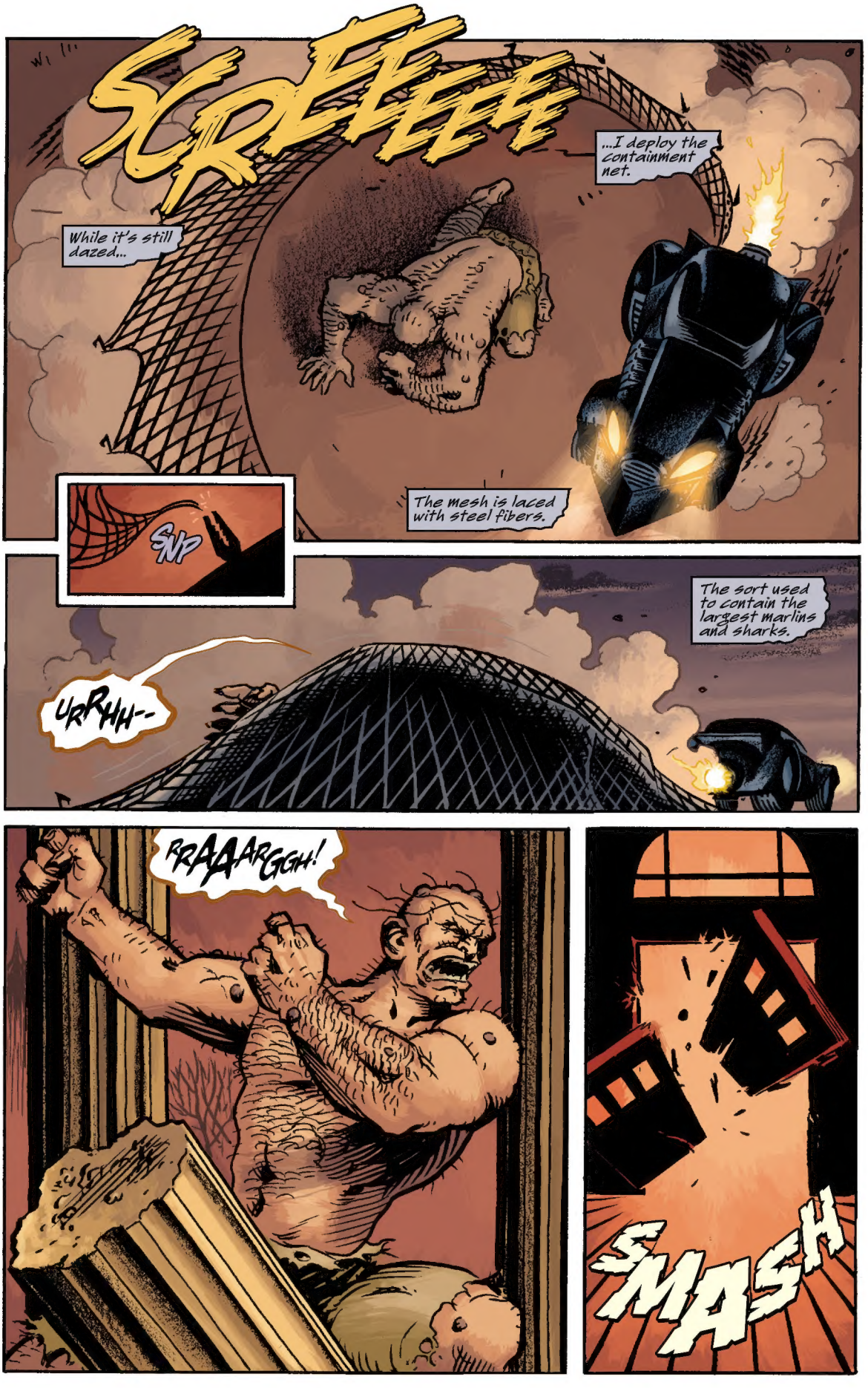
Strange has sent his monsters to wreak vengeance on Maroni.

NRR--?

YRRRRR

THWNK

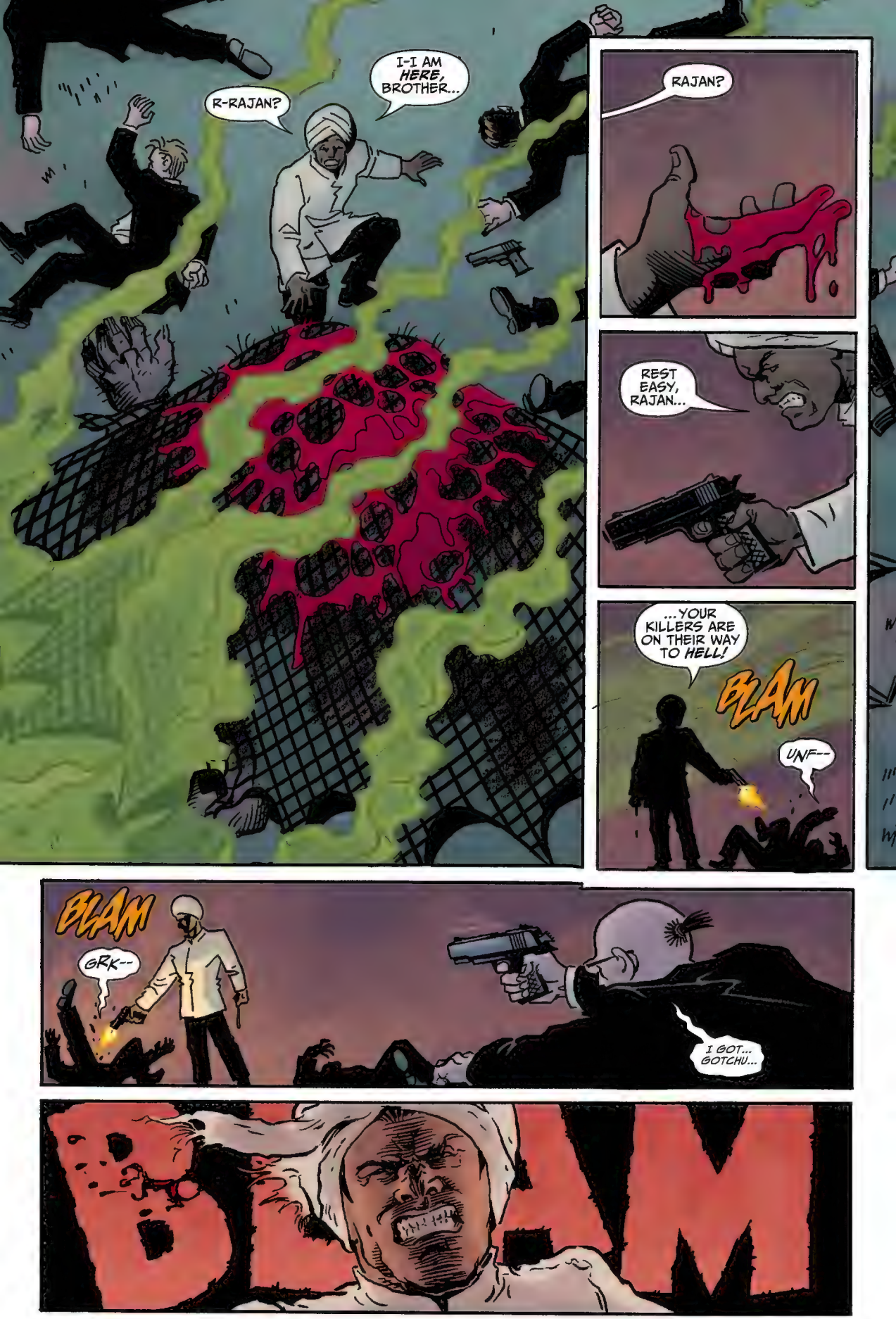
SCREEEEE


SCREEEE
...I deploy the containment net.
While it's still dazed...
The mesh is laced with steel fibers.
SNP
The sort used to contain the largest marlins and sharks.
URRHH--
RRAAARGGH!
SMASH

EASY, EASY...
HOLD IT...
NOW!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
KHRAAH!!
IS IT--?
SOME SORTA NETTING...
IT'S BREAKING LOOSE!! LET 'IM HAVE IT!!
THOK
TH' HELL WAS THAT?!

UNBELIEVABLE! IT'S HIM!!
SUCH TENACITY!
The other creatures have breached the main entrance.
The tighter confines will make any confrontation all the more treacherous.
SHOOT! SHOOT!
BLAM BLAM BANG
BLAM BLAM BANG
BLAM BLAM BANG
BLAM BANG
BLA
RAJAN!!

YOOOWWL!
THOK THOK
SSSSSSSS
WHAT TH--?
KOFF! KOFF!
CAN'T... SEE... I--I--
KOFF! KOFF!
UNHHH...
RAJAN! KOFF-- KOFF!
RAJAN!


R-RAJAN?
I-I AM HERE, BROTHER...
RAJAN?
REST EASY, RAJAN...
...YOUR KILLERS ARE ON THEIR WAY TO HELL!
BLAM
UNF--
BLAM
GRK--
I GOT... GOTCHU...
BLAM

BLAM
ACK--
SANJAY!
HE DOESN'T UTTER A SOUND.
AND SO MY FAITHFUL AIDE GOES TO JOIN HIS PITIFUL BROTHER.
ONE MORE REASON FOR MARONI TO DIE.
Y'HEAR THAT?!
SAL!! THERE'S A HELIPAD ON THE ROOF! THE ROMAN KEEPS A FULLY GASSED BIRD JUST FOR EMERGENCIES!
THEY'RE INSIDE THE DAMN HOUSE!! WHAT'LL WE--
I LOVE THAT BIG LUG! LET'S GO!
MARONI! WAIT! WHAT--WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?!
I'M NOT PART OF THI--
LEGGO, YA WEASEL!!
WAK
UNGH--

ALL RIGHT, BOYS...

UNH--?

RAAAAGGH!

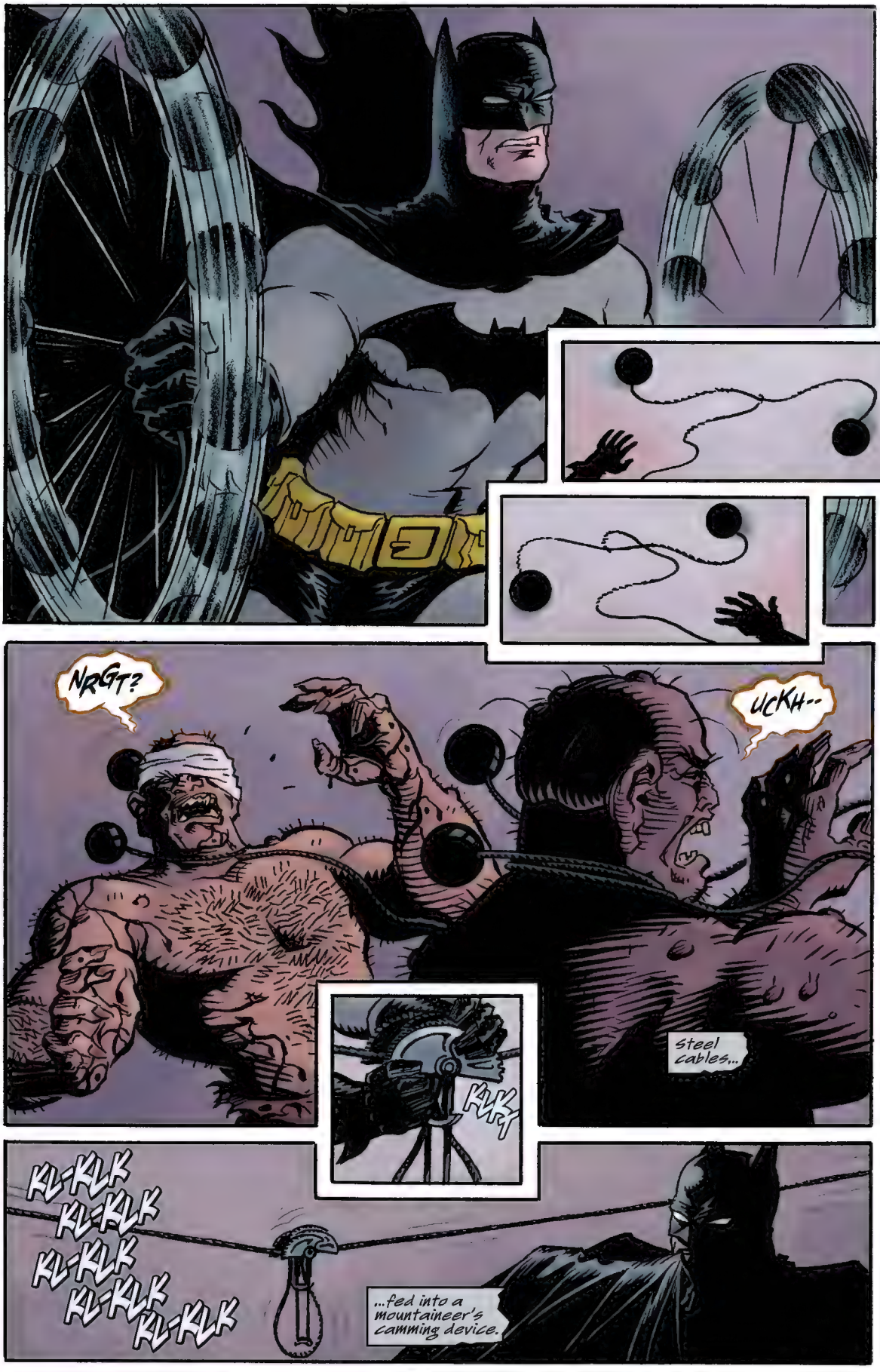
...PLAYTIME'S OVER!

AGGGRR--!

The slaughter, so utterly savage...

...WORSE than even men such as THESE can expect from their VIOLENT, sordid lives.

And still the creatures hunger for more.


NRGT?
UCKH--
steel cables...
KLK
KL-KLK
KL-KLK
KL-KLK
KL-KLK
KL-KLK
...fed into a mountaineer's camming device.

KL-KLK
KL-KLK
KL-KLK
KL-KLK
KL-KLK
KL-KLK
The harder they tug, the faster it ratchets in the lines.
Until the only focus of all that bound-up rage...
...is each other!
RRAAGGH!
ARRGKKK!
ARGHH!
WAK
RRROARGH!
SMASH

YOU ARE INJURED. HOW BADLY?
UHHH... WHAT'S--?
YAAGH!
YOU!! YOU'RE THAT-- THAT... WH-WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
J-JUST A SCRAPE. BUT, WHA... WHAT DO YOU--?
MARONI.
WHERE HAS HE GONE TO HIDE?
THE... THE ROOF!
THERE'S A HELI-COPTER...
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR A MAN OF YOUR STRIPE.
GO HOME, NORMAN.

HE...HE...
...KNEW MY NAME!
ALL RIGHT!
Heh-heh! COULDN'T BE EASIER! LET'S GO...
C'MON, FIRE IT UP!
WHATTAYA MEAN? I DON'T HOW TO FLY ONE OF THOSE THINGS!
TH'HELL--?! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED--
I NEVER SAID--!
NNRRGGH--
APF--
D-D-D...

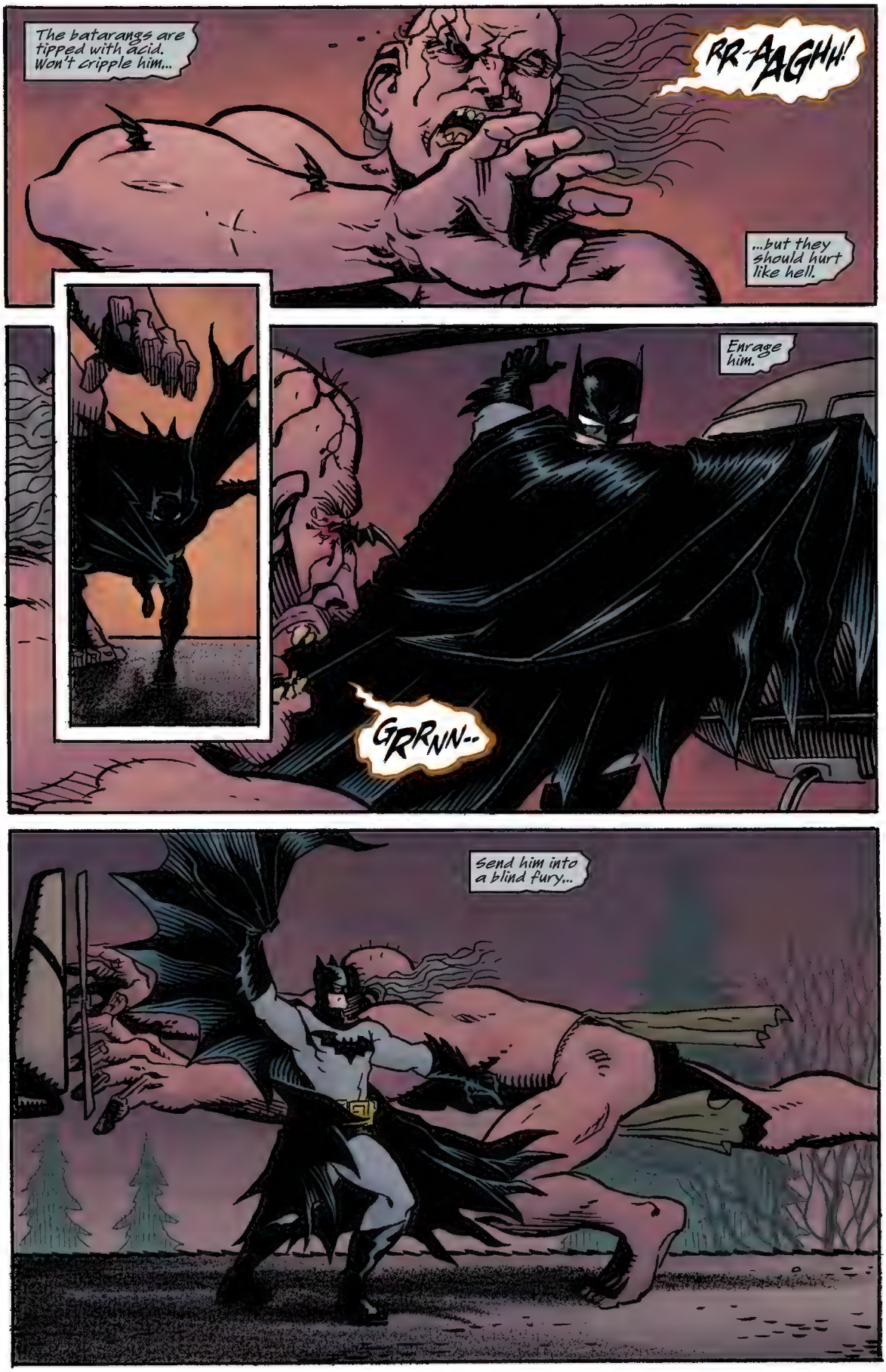
NNRGGH--
SAL! IT'S...MY GOD! IT'S SO HUGE!
HOLY FREAKIN' MOSES!!
AAGHH!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
RNGH!
FAK
NGH--!
AAAAAAAHHH--
WH-WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?! WHO... WHO SENT YOU?!!
RAAGGH!

A fourth creature.
One more ruined life for which Hugo Strange must answer.
NNPHHT--
Luckily, I came prepared.
Animal tranquilizer.
Should bring down an elephant.
CHNK
RAAGGH!!

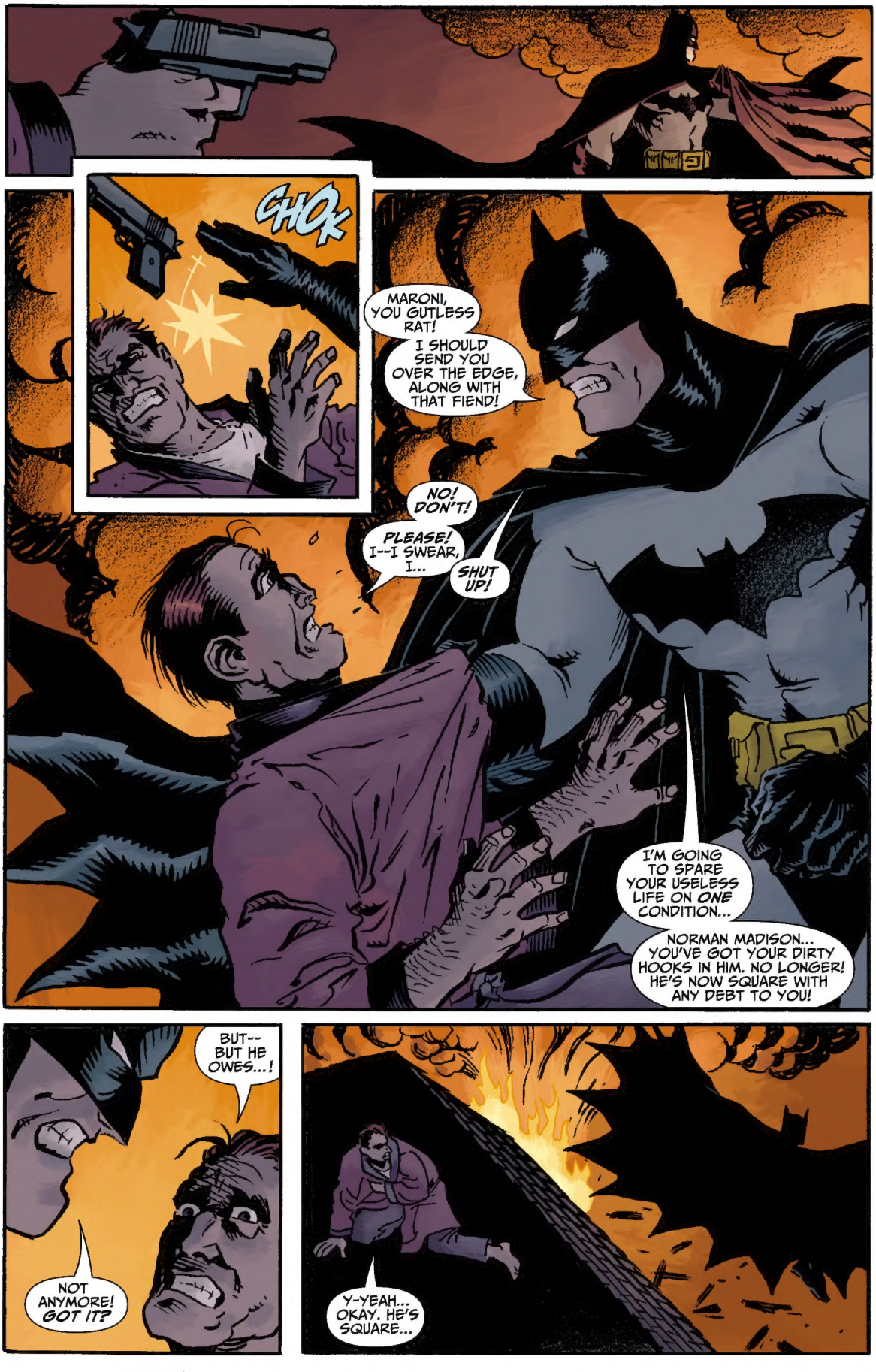
HE...HE KNEW MY NAME!
THE GUNS ARE SILENT. I CAN BARELY GAIN MY FEET AGAIN.
DOWNSTAIRS, A SCENE OF UNSPEAKABLE CARNAGE.
IN THE MIDDLE, TWO CREATURES OF UNBELIEVABLE SIZE--THEIR BODIES AS TORN AND BROKEN AS ALL THE OTHERS.
I MUST GET OUT OF HERE, HE SAID.
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ME...
DESPITE THE RISK...
...I CAN'T RESIST CHANCING A PEEK. JUST TO KNOW FOR SURE.
JUST TO SEE THE END OF MARONI'S WRETCHED LIFE.
WAM
UNGH!
AKGH!

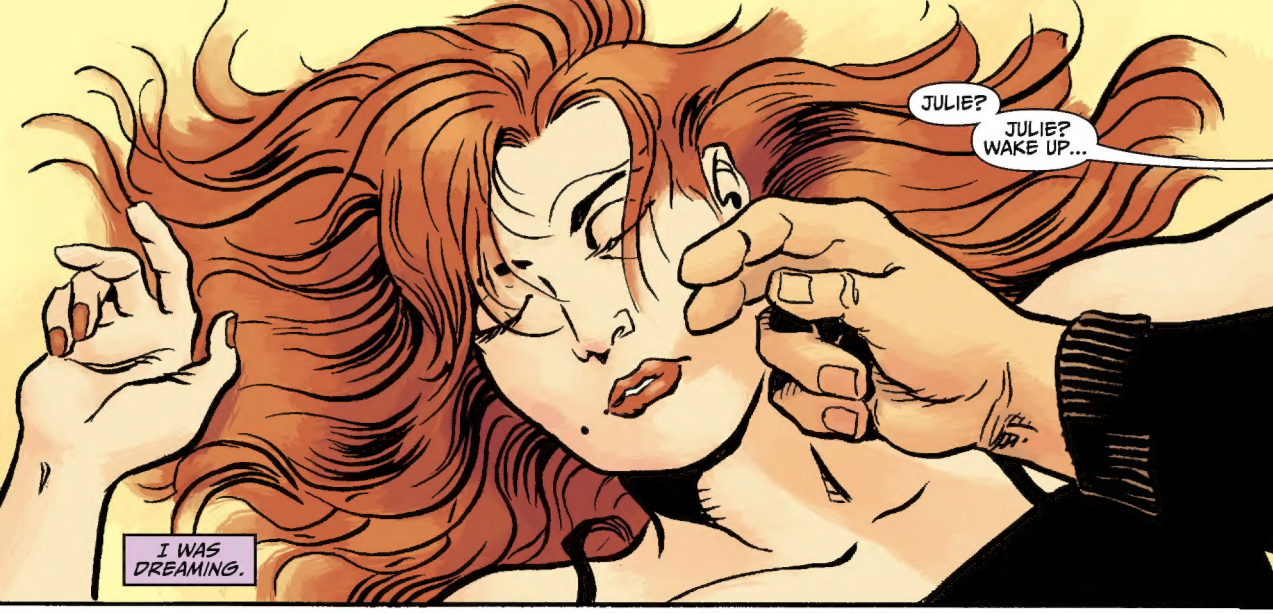
WHO IS THIS?
THUD
ONE OF MARONI'S SURVIVING THUGS, NO DOUBT.
I NOW SEE THAT I HAVE MADE A MISTAKE.
MY CURIOSITY IS HUBRIS. I MUST LEAVE THIS PLACE.
THIS IS NO PLACE FOR ME.
GO HOME, NORMAN.
GO HOME.
The trang should have dropped him by now.
He's groggy...

...but still on his feet.
NNRGGH--
BACK OFF, MARONI!
LEAVE HIM TO ME!
CHOK

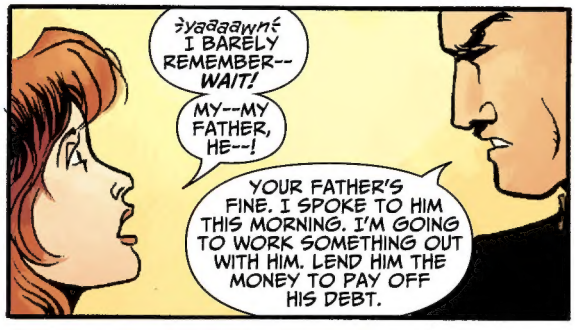

The batarangs are tipped with acid. Won't cripple him...
RR-AAGHH!
...but they should hurt like hell.
Enrage him.
GRRNN--
Send him into a blind fury...

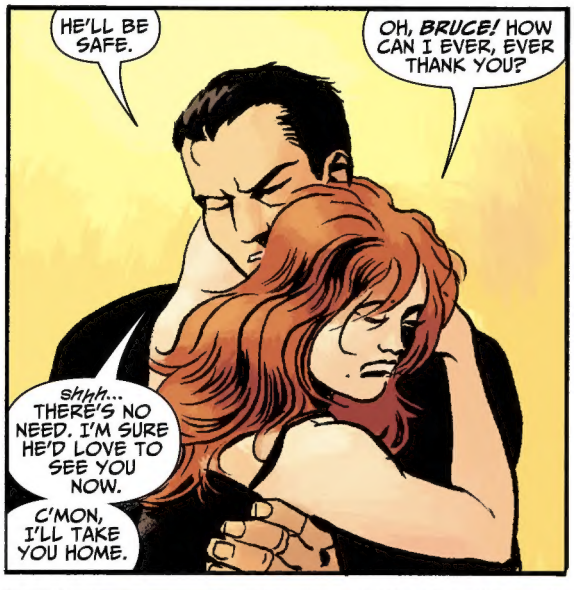
WHAM
BOOM

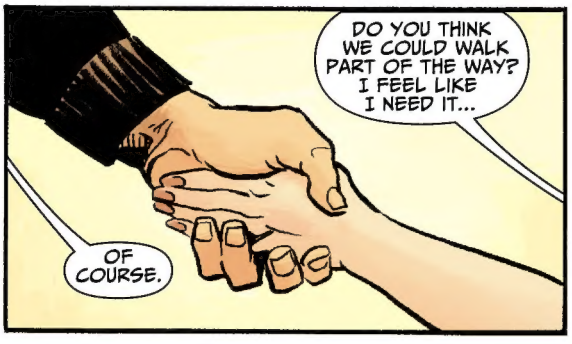

CHOK
MARONI, YOU GUTLESS RAT!
I SHOULD SEND YOU OVER THE EDGE, ALONG WITH THAT FIEND!
NO! DON'T!
PLEASE! I--I SWEAR, I...
SHUT UP!
I'M GOING TO SPARE YOUR USELESS LIFE ON ONE CONDITION...
NORMAN MADISON... YOU'VE GOT YOUR DIRTY HOOKS IN HIM. NO LONGER! HE'S NOW SQUARE WITH ANY DEBT TO YOU!
BUT-- BUT HE OWES...!
NOT ANYMORE! GOT IT?
Y-YEAH... OKAY. HE'S SQUARE...

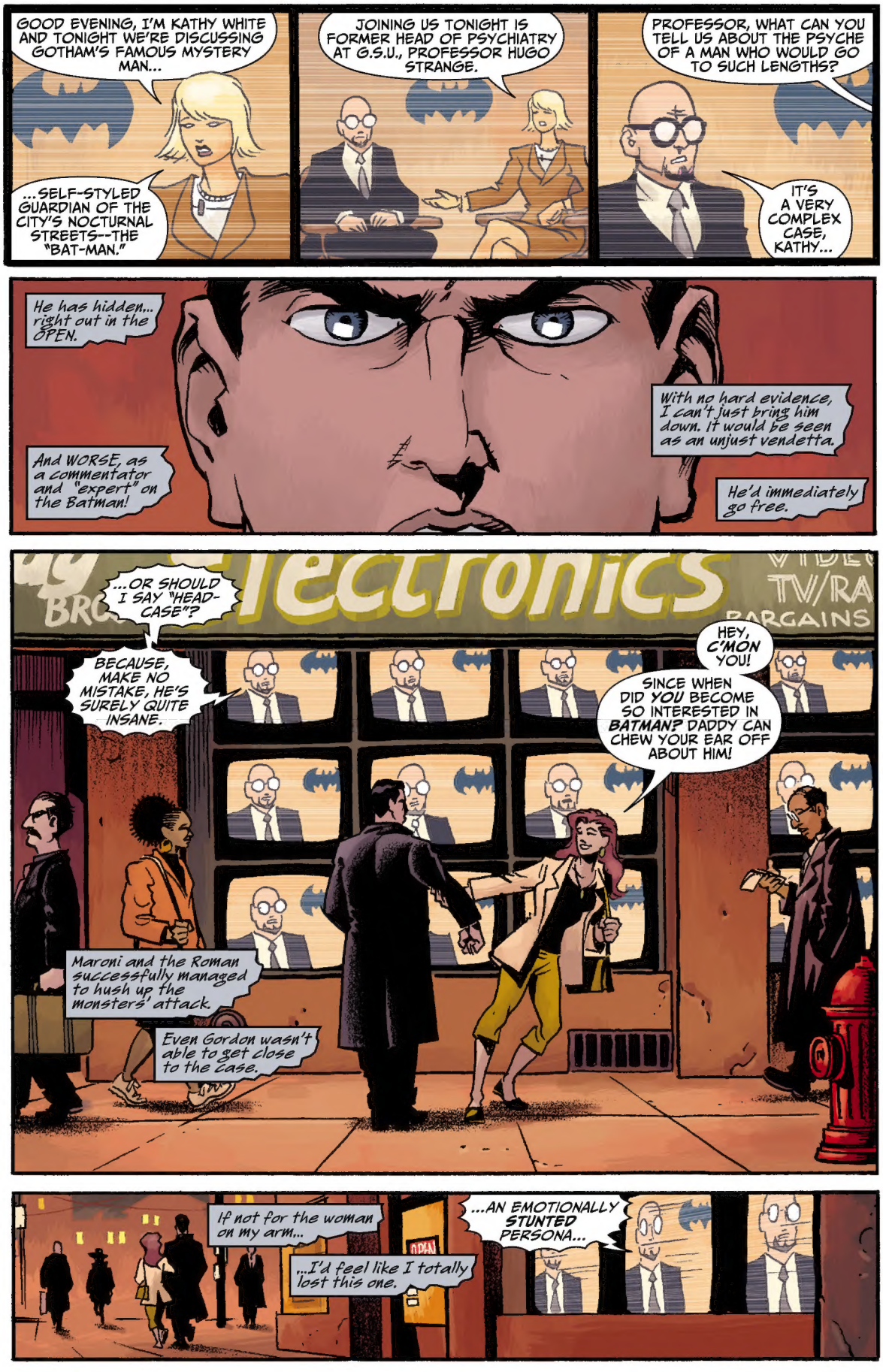

JULIE?
JULIE? WAKE UP...
I WAS DREAMING.

ahh... WHA--?
B-BRUCE, I... WHAT... WHERE...? HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN ASLEEP?
ABOUT A DAY AND A HALF.
YOU PASSED OUT. SOMETIMES, WHEN THE BODY IS NEARING A STATE OF HYSTERIA, IT JUST SHUTS DOWN. SELF-PRESERVATION.
YOU'RE FINE, NOW.
I DREAMT I RODE A WILD, GALLOPING HORSE, WITH NO SADDLE OR REINS.
EVENTUALLY, I FELL OFF AND BRUCE WAS THERE TO CATCH ME.
BUT THEN HE RAN OFF, TRYING TO CATCH THE HORSE.


¿yaaaawn? I BARELY REMEMBER-- WAIT!
MY--MY FATHER, HE--!
YOUR FATHER'S FINE. I SPOKE TO HIM THIS MORNING. I'M GOING TO WORK SOMETHING OUT WITH HIM. LEND HIM THE MONEY TO PAY OFF HIS DEBT.


HE'LL BE SAFE.
OH, BRUCE! HOW CAN I EVER, EVER THANK YOU?
shhh... THERE'S NO NEED. I'M SURE HE'D LOVE TO SEE YOU NOW.
C'MON, I'LL TAKE YOU HOME.


DO YOU THINK WE COULD WALK PART OF THE WAY? I FEEL LIKE I NEED IT...
OF COURSE.


GOOD EVENING, I'M KATHY WHITE AND TONIGHT WE'RE DISCUSSING GOTHAM'S FAMOUS MYSTERY MAN...
...SELF-STYLED GUARDIAN OF THE CITY'S NOCTURNAL STREETS--THE "BAT-MAN."
JOINING US TONIGHT IS FORMER HEAD OF PSYCHIATRY AT G.S.U., PROFESSOR HUGO STRANGE.
PROFESSOR, WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE PSYCHE OF A MAN WHO WOULD GO TO SUCH LENGTHS?
IT'S A VERY COMPLEX CASE, KATHY...
He has hidden... right out in the OPEN.
And WORSE, as a commentator and "expert" on the Batman!
With no hard evidence, I can't just bring him down. It would be seen as an unjust vendetta.
He'd immediately go free.
...OR SHOULD I SAY "HEAD-CASE"?
BECAUSE, MAKE NO MISTAKE, HE'S SURELY QUITE INSANE.
HEY, C'MON YOU!
SINCE WHEN DID YOU BECOME SO INTERESTED IN BATMAN? DADDY CAN CHEW YOUR EAR OFF ABOUT HIM!
Maroni and the Roman successfully managed to hush up the monsters' attack.
Even Gordon wasn't able to get close to the case.
If not for the woman on my arm...
...I'd feel like I totally lost this one.
...AN EMOTIONALLY STUNTED PERSONA...

SO, YOU THINK HE'S DANGEROUS?
OH, UNDOUBTEDLY.
HASN'T HE ALREADY COMMITTED THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF ASSAULT, MANY TIMES OVER?
SUCH OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR IS UTTERLY DISCONNECTED WITH THE REST OF REALITY.
HE'S NOT CONCERNED WITH HOW THE REST OF THE WORLD THINKS OR FEELS.
ALL THAT MATTERS TO THIS "BAT-MAN" IS HIS OWN PERVERSE AND RELENTLESS VERSION OF JUSTICE.
AND HE WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO ACHIEVE THOSE ENDS!
STOP AT NOTHING...
...RELENTLESS...
...INSANE...
...SURELY, HE KNOWS WHAT I DID...
...WHY I WAS THERE.
HE KNEW MY NAME.
END